

No.	Comment	Response	Recommended Action or Revision Made
2	We kept our review of the MRIP document broad as the document is very broad in nature. Perhaps our biggest criticism is that if the document had more specificity it would be more useful as a guidance document, especially as it could better refine some of the goals to be achieved, with more measurable metrics for progress.	The Strategic Plan deliberately addresses program delivery at the strategic level and defers specific details to subsequent implementation actions. The plan does recognize the need for adding specifics to program requirements and procedures, and provides for developing them as the plan is executed. See, for example, Tactics 2.1.1 and 2.3.1.	None. No revision necessary.
3	Overall the plan is very broad in nature without many specifics and puts emphasis on communicating better with stakeholders. The key will be if it is implemented properly and if communication is truly upheld between NOAA and the stakeholders.	We believe adoption of the Strategic Plan, including its emphasis on two-way communication with stakeholders and partners, will improve program performance and partners' satisfaction with the program.	None. No revision necessary.
4	Note: While the plan calls for expanding regional implementation of data collection and data management, [the commenter] think[s] the best way the state could contribute with this part of the plan is through full certification of the state survey so that the [state] survey is recognized as the data source for MRIP in [the state]. A request for follow-up discussion was made by the commenter.	The Strategic Plan does not address individual survey certifications or similar-level actions. However, we do expect to adopt more detailed guidance and procedures for the certification process under Strategy 2.1 in a new Tactic 2.1.2 that documents MRIP program management, policies and procedures.	Added a new Tactic 2.2.2 to read: "Document the major elements of MRIP program management, policy and procedures (e.g. Organizational Governance, Planning and Implementation, Certification/Transition, Budget Processes)." The timeline shows the work beginning in second half of FY 17 and continuing through FY 18.
5	Goal 1 discusses meeting customer needs and evaluating the feasibility of the costs of meeting those needs. It is uncertain if NOAA would have the eventual resources to meet some needs, such as in-season management, but it appears they are willing to discuss needs regionally. That is a positive step. It would be better if there were more specific approaches and metrics defined within the goal, to make it more quantitative. Existing metric is more of a feel good approach, rather than truly outcome based.	More data is needed to refine metrics as proposed. Metrics will likely be improved over time as MRIP acquires information via several information-collection Strategies and Tactics in the Plan. These include the Regional Implementation Plans and customer needs and satisfaction assessments.	None. No revision necessary.
6	Goal 4 calls for ensuring sound and strong science as the foundation of the survey which could be accomplished if enough funding is made available for MRIP to conduct the independent reviews and “state-of-the-art developments in survey design” they wish to implement. The second outcome metric, to be used within stock assessments, at least in the Southeast Region, is currently being achieved, with the “scientific uncertainty” determined only within the MRIP computations, not external to the estimation process. It’s not clear whether the term is to reduce uncertainty within the estimates, or to not have additional uncertainty applied to the estimates. It seems that this particular goal could be refined to be more explicit – to narrow confidence limits in estimates – rather than minimize scientific uncertainty for instance.	The intent of Goal 4 and the second associated outcome is to minimize the contribution of the recreational catch estimates to the scientific uncertainty of fisheries stock assessment outputs and associated uses, such as for determining OFLs and setting ACLs. Such scientific uncertainty is affected by all sources of survey error. Hence the strategies associated with the Goal are expected to reduce such error and to achieve a concomitant reduction in associated uncertainty. We agree it would be preferable to develop a metric that quantifies the intended reduction, but that is not currently possible. For the immediate future we will monitor the use/nonuse of MRIP-derived estimates in stock assessments while working toward a better means of quantifying the reduction in uncertainty for future use.	None. No revision necessary.
7	Regional Implementation Teams are mentioned, but it is not clear how regions or states may contribute or be part of those (it does mention Fisheries Information Networks (FINs)) and “ad-hoc” teams. It may be beneficial if the plan clearly laid out composition and selection of the Regional teams.	The final Strategic Plan identifies all members of the MRIP Regional Implementation Teams.	Added the following text at the end of the first sentence of the second paragraph under the Regional Implementation bullet on p. 7: Each Regional Implementation Team includes representatives of the involved state and territorial governments, the Regional Management Council(s), the Interstate Marine Fisheries Commission, the NMFS Regional Office and Fisheries Science Center, and the NMFS Headquarters Office. Also, added a text box to the Appendix, showing Regional Implementation Team membership.

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Goal 1: Meet Customer Needs			
9	Add Beaufort Headboat Survey to MRIP website. Allows public to have a better understanding that MRIP does not represent all the recreational data. Customer needs assessment can be very useful and not a feel good approach. RecFIN example! #8 project for same currency was completed in March 2016	Addition of specific external datasets to the MRIP Queries web page is a suggested action that is at a level of detail below the Strategic Plan's Strategies/Tactics level. As additional surveys are certified and implemented, we will consider adding compatible statistics to the MRIP website queries tool under Strategy 2.3, with the support of the implementing partner. In the case of the Southeast Region Head Boat Survey, data confidentiality issues currently prevent making the data available via the MRIP Query Tool.	None. No revision necessary.
10	In the Gulf: Add LA Creel and Texas data to MRIP website (also relates to Goal 5)	Addition of specific external datasets to the MRIP Queries web page is a suggested action that is at a level of detail below the Strategic Plan's Strategies/Tactics level. As additional surveys are certified and implemented, we will consider adding compatible statistics to the MRIP website queries tool under Strategy 2.3, with the support of the implementing partner. In the case of the LA Creel and Texas (and other) surveys, the surveys do not produce estimates in a format compatible with the Query Tool. In these cases, we make every effort to post available estimates at an annual level.	None. No revision necessary.
11	Caution should be provided when the users obtain catch estimates for rare event species (i.e. golden tilefish, snowy grouper). The range of PSEs when values are not usable should be communicated.	Tactic 2.1.3 addresses this comment.	None. No revision necessary.
12	Should provide caution with regard to regional estimates. For example, MRIP assigns all of Monroe County to the Gulf. Issues such as these should be communicated to the user.	Tactic 2.3.2 calls for maintaining a public website with comprehensive documentation of methods, sample frames, and statistics. We agree with the need to continuously improve the metadata relating to MRIP statistics and our Queries pages. We will address these needs via Tactic 2.3.2.	None. No revision necessary.
13	One thing that is often asked by the public is the number of samples that estimates are based on. If the user could determine that online, it would save time for S&T, and others to have to do it.	Strategy 2.3 MRIP will look to the results of the Communication Needs Assessments and Customer Needs Assessments to comprehensively catalog these kinds of specific information needs. We will address them via Strategy 2.3 (Ensure complete transparency and stakeholder access for methods, standards, and controls).	None. No revision necessary.
Goal 2: Provide Quality Products			
15	Have MRIP and Science Center agreement on how to do weight estimations (e.g., minimum sample size, similar method of aggregation for low sample sizes)	Addressing resolution of different procedures for fish weight estimation is a suggested action that is at a level of detail below the Strategic Plan's Strategies/Tactics level. We will work to address such resolutions where identified as priorities in MRIP Regional Implementation Plans.	None. No revision necessary.
16	Is there a plan for warehousing the original, non-calibrated data?	Yes, all original data will be warehoused.	None. No revision necessary.
17	Is there a method to identify any data fields that were corrected and if so, retain what the original value was prior to correction	Yes, we do track changes, and original scanned data sheets are retained.	None. No revision necessary.
18	It needs to be made clear to the customers that when they query MRIP that it does not represent all the recreational data. It should state states that have their own surveys, and that headboat (and eventually charter) are not included in MRIP. This is a source of confusion to the public.	Tactic 2.3.2 calls for maintaining a public website with comprehensive documentation of methods, sample frames, and statistics. We agree with the need to continuously improve the metadata relating to MRIP statistics and our Queries pages. We will address these needs via Tactic 2.3.2.	None. No revision necessary.

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Goal 3: Inform Key Stakeholders			
20	Could a post-stratification option be added to the website.	MRIP will look to the results of the Communication Needs Assessments and Customer Needs Assessments to define specific partner needs for custom domain estimation. As appropriate and feasible, we will address them via Strategy 2.3 (Ensure complete transparency and stakeholder access for methods, standards, and controls).	None. No revision necessary.
21	Could there be an option to group species in queries	MRIP will look to the results of the Communication Needs Assessments and Customer Needs Assessments to define specific partner needs for grouped species estimates beyond those now available via the Snapshot feature of the Queries Tool. As appropriate and feasible, we will address them via Strategy 2.3 (Ensure complete transparency and stakeholder access for methods, standards, and controls).	None. No revision necessary.
22	Could there be an option to select a range of years in the effort estimation query as opposed to doing it one year at a time	This is not feasible with the current query tool.	None. No revision necessary.
23	When communicating with stakeholders, make sure it is noted that not all recreational data are collected by MRIP in the Southeast (e.g., headboat survey, LA Creel, Texas)	We will address via Strategy 2.3 (Ensure complete transparency and stakeholder access for methods, standards, and controls).	None. No revision necessary.
24	Modify strategies to reflect emphasis on engagement and dialogue	The strategies have been updated.	The following strategies were updated (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.6 remained the same): 3.4 -- Actively solicit and integrate stakeholder feedback into outreach and education materials -- and into the way information is communicated. 3.5 -- Use the new MRIP website as a key component of education and outreach. 3.7 -- Continually assess and evaluate the effectiveness of MRIP Communications efforts and outcomes, and adjust the Communications plan as necessary.
Goal 4: Ensure Sound Science and Goal 6: Meet Program Resources and Funding Needs			
26	Address issues of funding; in recent years funding for samplers has decreased and state partners do not have the ability to pick up this loss of funding	Goal 6 addresses this subject.	None. No revision necessary.
Goal 5: Operate Collaboratively			
28	It would be nice if landings from state and HB surveys could be queried in addition to MRIP so that a complete picture of rec landings could be captured. Would also be good to be able to post stratify areas like Monroe County.	This comment was addressed in responses to previous comments.	None. No revision necessary.
Miscellaneous			
30	Implementation of a specialized survey to ask about recreational fisher interactions with protected species (e.g., turtles, dolphins)	Partner needs to expand the coverage of current surveys for any purpose, including acquisition of data on protected species interactions, is expected to be addressed in MRIP Regional Implementation Plans (Strategy 5.2).	None. No revision necessary.
31	The MRIP Strategic Plan does a very good job of outlining the goals and objectives of MRIP as well as how NOAA Fisheries plans to achieve these goals and objectives. In my estimation, Goal 1 & 2 are essentially very similar and should be the core focus to make this a successful effort.	We acknowledge and appreciate the comment. We agree that there is a strong link between the first two goals--our customers need quality data. We felt it important to break out the second goal on its own to emphasize the strategies and tactics we will employ to improve data quality.	None. No revision necessary.
32	Again, it is my feeling that if MRIP produces recreational data that are viewed by the recreational industry as reasonably accurate and produced in a timely manner, the rest of the program will fall into place very easily.	We acknowledge and appreciate the comment. We believe that several elements of the Strategic Plan focus directly on the identified subjects.	None. No revision necessary.
33	While [I] understand that it is NOAA Fisheries job to serve all the user groups and all the users within those groups, the viable outcome from MRIP will ultimately be focused on a segment of the recreational community.	See below	None. No revision necessary.

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34	IMO, there are 3 major groups within the recreational fishing users. The first is probably the largest and they are those who have no clue who NOAA Fisheries is or what you do. The second group understands what and who NOAA Fisheries is, but has little if any back ground on MRFSS/MRIP and neither supports nor opposes MRIP. The third group is the one that has been keeping score on the whole MRFSS/MRIP issue and remains distrustful of the data coming out of the system. To a large extent, they are also influencers of some of those in the second group. If MRIP can supply a provable, quality data output that can satisfy the third group and that can be used by fisheries managers to determine fair and equitable allocations, the program will be a success.	We agree. A significant component of the MRIP Communications Strategy is to identify the key stakeholders and information pathways that influence others and to focus our two-way communications in these areas.	None. No revision necessary.
35	Job number one is to make sure that MRIP outputs an accurate and timely data set that can be utilized. I also believe that moving to an electronic submission of catch and effort data will greatly help with producing a timely and accurate data output.	We agree. The Strategic Plan addresses advancing electronic technology in Tactic 4.1.2. Under this strategy, we will build on the work we are doing per our Electronic Reporting Procedural Directive (http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/op/pds/documents/30/133/30-133-01.pdf).	None. No revision necessary.
36	The Commenter reviewed the Marine Recreational Information Program-Strategic Plan: 2017-2022. The Strategic Plan is a mature and well written document with clearly articulated goals, strategies, tactics, outcomes and metrics.	We acknowledge and appreciate the comment.	None. No revision necessary.
Page 2 – Goal 2: Provide Quality Data Products			
38	The term ‘minimum’ occurs a couple of times (“Develop comprehensive minimum survey and data requirements and processes”, “periodically revised established minimum requirements”). Some stakeholders are going to interpret this to mean that the agency has no intention of aspiring to exceed the minimum requirements. We suggest you use ‘optimum’ instead of ‘minimum’, or a similar term.	We believe it is necessary to define the minimum requirements for surveys, as a baseline that must be met or exceeded. However, we acknowledge that the intent of this term might be misunderstood. We will change the term to "baseline".	Replaced "minimum" with "baseline" in Strategy 2.1 and Tactics 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.3 and any associated text.
Page 2 – Goal 3: Inform Our Key Stakeholders			
40	The term ‘inform’ implies one-way communication when most of the information describing this goal refers to ‘communication’ which implies two-way exchange. It’s not until you get to the 4th bullet “integrate stakeholder feedback” that we explicitly discuss two-way communication.	We agree. It is more consistent with the intent of the Strategic Plan and supporting communications strategy to give more emphasis to two-way communication. We will change the Goal to emphasize engagement.	Revised Goal 3 as "Increase Understanding: Strengthen two-way communications with partners and stakeholders to improve their knowledge of the properties and use limitations of catch statistics, and to build confidence in the data."
41	Though we think the MRIP website can be an important part of the strategy in outreach and education of the saltwater recreational angling community, we suggest that support to the Marine Resource Educational Program (MREP) be enhanced with resources from the MRIP program. Indeed, the Northeast and Southeast MREP programs have initiated modules focused on recreational anglers, and the MRIP staff have engaged in those modules, we suggest that MRIP provide additional funding to support MREP’s recreational education initiatives. These modules have been highly successful and the participants recommend expanding to reach more anglers and party/charter captains. The MREP program is a highly effective education and outreach tool.	We agree. Tactic 3.4.2 specifically addresses increasing MRIP involvement with MREP.	None. No revision necessary.

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Page 3 – Goals 4 & 5: Ensure Sound Science and Operate Collaboratively			
43	A theme throughout the MRIP Strategic Plan suggests development of new analytical tools and enhancing collaborations among various partners. NOAA Science Centers have a plethora of statistical, modeling and survey expertise (including published recreational survey experts) . We suggest broader collaborations among NOAA FMPs, state agencies, academic and private research institutions, to capitalize on the diversity of expertise that exists among those groups. Building and utilizing expertise in survey design will be much more effective if a broader base network of experts is established and engaged. The ‘regional’ oriented approach is a good start, and we suggest a more localized approach to the understanding of specific local or community level recreational fishing conditions be integrated into the regional survey approach.	We agree that increasing participation in MRIP collaborations can result from the work of the MRIP Regional Implementation Teams. It can also be part of the reviews to be conducted under Strategy 5.1. We will add a new Tactic 5.1.5 to emphasize expnsion of collaborations.	Added a new Tactic 5.1.5 to read: "Expand MRIP collaborations, including adding addtional experts in survey desing and communications to MRIP consultant team."
Page 4 – Creating a Comprehensive Strategic Plan			
45	Catch the misspelling of implementation in this section		Corrected.
Page 4 – MRIP Mission			
47	While vision statements are usually written as factual statements, the vision statement “MRIP is the trusted source of U.S. marine recreational catch and effort statistics” is not going to be well received by some stakeholders unfamiliar with vision statements. Current, MRIP is not trusted by many stakeholders. Perhaps a way to clarify this for some stakeholders is to add the phrase “in the future” at the end of the vision statement.	We fully understand the challenge of attaining this Vision, but believe it is essential to the long term success of the program. To assure the intent to achieve the Vision in the future is understood, we will revise the Vison Statement to read: "MRIP will become the trusted source of U.S. marine recreational catch and effort statistics."	Revised the Vision Statement to read: "MRIP will become the trusted source of U.S. marine recreational catch and effort statistics."
48	Though Appendix A lists the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) Members, it may be advisable to more clearly articulate the ESC roles and members here in the main body of the document. Many casual readers may not deep-dive into the appendices for this important information. The ESC members comprise an impressive listing of experts and regional leaders. Having them listed up front may add more authority (respectability?) to the strategic plan. It also articulates the diversity of the ESC.	We agree. We will add a text box to include information about the ESC.	Added a text box on page 5 that describes the role and membership of the ESC.
Page 5 – MRIP Milestones first bullet: National Saltwater Angler Registry			
50	At public meetings and roundtables, this registry was promoted as a “more directed sampling frame” for random sampling purposes. The wording “comprehensive national directory” could be confusing or misleading. Consider rewording to clarify.	We will delete "comprehensive" on p. 5's discussion of the Registry.	Deleted "comprehensive" in p. 6's discussion of the Registry.
Page 6 – MRIP Milestones Figure			
52	This figure is effective at showing the past and current milestones, but some of the key milestones occur in 2018 and these are not shown on the figure.	The figure is intended to show key milestones achieved to date, and not to project future milestones. To avoid confusion, we will re-label the figure as "Progress to Date", rather than "milestones".	Re-labeled the figure on p. 6 as "Progress to Date", rather than "Milestones"
53	Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS): a link to progress reports of regional APAIS surveys, in this section or references in the Appendix, would help illustrate progress towards APAIS implementation and calibration. A listing of state agencies or private contractors that we are working with on APAIS would be valuable.	We agree. We will add links to the APAIS and FES Fact Sheets and to the NAS review.	Added links to the APAIS and FES Fact Sheets and to the NAS review.
54	Same for Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) transition to postal mail based Fishing Effort Survey (FES) progress reports or links to reports would be valuable.	We agree. We will add links to the APAIS and FES Fact Sheets and to the NAS review.	Added links to the APAIS and FES Fact Sheets and to the NAS review.
55	For-Hire Electronic Reporting (ER) is happening quickly. A listing of issues still to address, like how will self-reported data be verified?, would be valuable. This may illustrate the in-depth thought and planning that has gone into this effort.	This question is addressed on the MRIP Procedural Directive on Developing For Hire Electronic Logbooks (http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/New-MRIP/FINAL_Updated_For-Hire_Road_Map-12.6.16.pdf). We will add a link to its reference on p. 6.	Added a link to reference to the Road Map on Developing For Hire Electronic Logbooks on p. 7.

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Page 7 – Regional Implementation			
57	Again, more information on ‘Regional Implementation Teams’ would be helpful. A listing of team members, organizations, Points of Contact, etc. Or list them in the Appendix.	The final Strategic Plan identifies all members of the MRIP Regional Implementation Teams.	Added information on membership of MRIP Regional Implementation Plans in Appendix A.
58	At what scale are Regional Implementation Teams working, i.e., are they making recommendations at the micro-scale level of individual access points, unique characteristics of localized fisheries, etc.?	The text box on p. 20 identifies the tasks of the Regional Implementation Teams, as envisioned by the MRIP Strategic Plan.	None. No revision necessary.
59	Page 7 – General comment: The strategic plan ends rather abruptly. It would be good to have a short paragraph as a concluding statement with: Thank you for your interest/time to read this, where to find additional information, how to personally contribute or get engaged, and encourage/solicit, from the reader, support of and collaboration for NOAA, and its recreational partners, in their efforts to get enhanced recreational fisheries data to improve management.	We agree. We have added concluding text as recommended.	Add a concluding paragraph at the end of the main section on p. 8 consistent with the comment.
60	Something like: Thank you for your interest and time to read this strategic plan. We look forward to working with you as we continue to fully implement the MRIP program. Accomplishing these lofty goals will necessitate a multi-faceted and collaborative team effort. If you are interested in learning more details visit our “countmyfish.noaa.gov” website (list the MRIP site too) and become engaged by contacting: MRIP, regional rec. coordinators, Region/Center POC, etc.....	We agree. We have added concluding text as recommended.	See above.
61	MRIP Vision: Trust is still lacking in the quality and accuracy of MRIP estimates from the vast majority of recreational anglers. Unfortunately much of that is linked to the need for using MRIP data in recreational quota monitoring which it was never intended to be used for. There is large confidence in the commercial IFQ system as it provides timely and accurate results and allows scientists to manage commercial annual catch limits with much less uncertainty. Until recreational anglers in our region start to see tangible benefits (i.e., smaller buffers on ACL’s, more days at sea) from newly implemented data collection systems the confidence in estimated landings is going to be low.	We appreciate the challenges in building trust to achieve our Vision. We expect the Strategic Plan's emphasis on identifying and addressing specific regional needs, two-way communication, and continuing to improve the quality of recreational catch data to move us in that direction, but we recognize it will take time.	None. No revision necessary.
62	Regional Survey Reviews and Supplemental Surveys for Specialized Needs: The statement “Additionally, MRIP has developed methods for providing more timely and precise estimates of overall catch for specialized needs, including red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico...”. I do agree that MRIP has worked in collaboration with the states to help improve specialized surveys in our region but I’m not aware of any specific methods MRIP has developed to improve timeliness of estimates. I know MRIP has done work to address lack of representative coverage in offshore fishing sites in the APAIS draw process but what methods has MRIP developed to improve timeliness?	Timeliness has been addressed through a number of MRIP Projects, including its work on developing for-hire logbooks, studying the effectiveness of one month waves in the FES, and in supporting some of the specialized survey designs for red snapper. We recognize timeliness constraints imposed by the consideration of validation data in the generation of estimates and continue to seek solutions that balance concerns for data quality and timeliness.	None. No response necessary.
63	I think the goals and tactics are comprehensive and list all of the major areas we have been concerned with. I think it’s vital that you provide more documentation and explanation for current survey and estimation processes. If your regional partners that are administering and implementing your surveys do not have a sufficient understanding of how they work it is difficult to explain and defend the results that are produced by MRIP. I also hope that we are shortly moving away from the need for calibrating estimates and settling into a period of consistency in data collection methods. The recreational angling public struggles to understand the reason for calibration and often thinks of it as scientists manipulating data to meet some perceived agenda. There will always be the need for some research and development for new technology or survey designs to meet evolving management issues but I hope the days of major frequent design changes are in the past for at least the period of this strategic plan.	We agree about the need for improving documentation. Strategy 2.1 speaks directly to this priority. We also understand the concern regarding repeated calibrations/transitions. However, if regional partners seek to change methods via the Regional Implementation Planning process, future transition planning and potential recalibrations will be necessary, for example, for possible implementation of charter boat electronic trip reporting.	None. No revision necessary.

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64	We didn't see HMS discussed much at all. We are mentioned maybe half a dozen times in passing, usually associated with regional implementation teams or regions with specialized regional surveys. However, the Large Pelagic Survey is never mentioned by name, I would have expected some reference that Atlantic HMS data is collected through this other concurrent survey, just so there is reference to it.	The final plan appendix section on Addressing the 2006 National Academies' Recommendations includes a new description of work on HMS/LPS projects. Also, more information has been added regarding the membership of the Regional Implementation Teams.	Add a subsection to the Appendix section on National Academies' Recommendations just before the Specialized Surveys subsection (p. 22) to read: Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Data Collection: NOAA's Office of Sustainable Fisheries' HMS Management Division has led an ad hoc MRIP Regional Management Team that is developing an MRIP Regional Implementation Plan for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species. This plan will review and prioritize improvements of specialized data collections for offshore, big game fisheries. The current design of the Large Pelagics Survey (LPS), conducted from Virginia to Maine, consists of a list-based telephone effort survey to estimate the number of trips by HMS permitted vessels and a dockside, intercept survey to estimate the catch per trip. The estimates from these LPS components are combined to estimate catch by species. Potential studies, identified in the HMS MRIP Implementation Plan, include reviewing and improving the LPS design to address potential sources of bias (from sampling or non-sampling error) and expanding the LPS to the Southeast to better cover the geographic range of Atlantic HMS species. In addition to new studies, previously completed MRIP pilot studies will inform the re-design of the LPS. Previous MRIP pilot studies have included projects to evaluate HMS tournament vs. non-tournament trip sampling and evaluate the non-response bias in the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey. Review, improvement, and expansion of other current HMS data collection efforts, including the Recreational Billfish Survey (RBS, for HMS tournament reporting) and Catch Card Census (CCC) programs, are also under consideration. Likewise, potential projects to improve information on recreational coastal shark fisheries, boost biological sampling of HMS (e.g. for genetic population analyses, age and growth studies, and natal origin), and reduce constituents' reporting burden are also part of the developing HMS MRIP plan.
65	On page 19 titled "Pacific, Western Pacific, and Caribbean Surveys Review and Improvement" where there is discussion on some of the efforts to improve specialized surveys, I think LPS [Large Pelagics Survey] could be mentioned here as well as the pilot studies (private access effort, optimized sampling, tournaments).	See response to preceding comment.	
66	Recreational fishing is very important to our economy and quality of life. Please in your deliberations remember just give nature a chance and it will heal itself, my 2 cents says; keep the bottom trawlers off the beaches and nearshore dragging so the vegetation and fish can return, support reef projects, keep areas off limits to any fishing where needed, keep forage fish a priority, consider public buoy's to reduce dragging anchors, penalize polluters and people who break the laws so that it hurts them enough to make them change....	We appreciate the comment.	None. No revisions necessary.
67	Consider broadening the MRIP funding priorities to not limit future work. As currently written, the elements that must be included in a "regional implementation funding process" seem to preclude potential for partnerships.	The Strategic Plan does not preclude expanding collaboration beyond the current core partners, either nationally or at the regional level. However, it does emphasize the regional planning process as a primary means of identifying needs and setting priorities. Accordingly, it will be important to work with regional partners to secure their understanding and support for expanded partnerships and broadened program opportunity in the future.	None. No revision necessary.
68	For example, restoration funds may offer a chance for MRIP and [Office of.....] collaboration and the priorities in the appendix do not account for accepting this funding, however the goal "Explore opportunities to expand program support through leveraging funding and capability of partner and stakeholder programs, including NOAA programs" would encompass this sort of collaboration.	We agree. Tactic 6.1.3 is intended to ensure such opportunities for collaboration are fully explored. In doing so, it will be important to ensure that regional partners and MRIP Regional Implementation Teams are on board.	None. No revision necessary.
69	Include reference to commercial fishing industry and how MRIP would interface with them. Outreach between commercial and recreational sectors is important two-way communication	The MRIP communications program recognizes commercial fisheries as one of the MRIP stakeholder entities. MRIP communications efforts will continue to address this stakeholder group as appropriate.	None. No revision necessary.

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70	In response to the 2006 reauthorization of the Magnuson – Stevens Act, the Council has developed regulations that require in-season monitoring for several species. The timeliness demonstrated by the existing MRIP survey may be inadequate in this context, as data are reported in two month waves with an approximate 45-day delay between the end of the wave and the release of the data. This problem has been exacerbated by ongoing changes in survey design and recalibration, which make projections based on previous catch rates more difficult and with greater uncertainty. The [Commenter] feels further guidance and development of best practices on data use, limitations, and communication strategies would aid NMFS and the Council in their 006625JUN2017 obligations for in-season monitoring for species that have exceeded their ACL in the previous fishing year.	It is essential that MRIP Regional Implementation Plans fully describe the specifics and basis of regional partners' needs for timeliness of delivery of preliminary catch estimates. Once such needs are fully documented and justified, we will be able to identify potential methods and costs of meeting the needs. We expect the question of guidance on data use, limitations and related questions to be addressed in a workshop being planned jointly with SEFSC, GMFMC, and SAFMC for FY 18.	None. No revision necessary.
71	The [Commenter] is pleased with ongoing efforts to improve recreational fisheries data, including efforts to improve the Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey, calibrate the new survey with historical data, and improve effort estimates with a new mail-based survey. Despite this progress, several challenges remain in Gulf recreational fisheries. For example, the private recreational red snapper fishing season in the Gulf is extremely short (three days in federal waters in 2017), and the existing protocols are insufficient to characterize catch and effort for this fishery. The Gulf States that participate in MRIP are developing specialized methods for red snapper data collection, and additional outreach and education is necessary to explain the methods, results, and manner with which these data are used. These surveys are of great interest to stakeholders; however, the methods and comparability among states, and between the specialized surveys and MRIP, can be confusing to stakeholders and reduce confidence and compliance with the subsequent regulations.	We agree. Regional MRIP communications will continue to address this subject. Also, MRIP and Gulf FIN are jointly planning a fourth in the series of red snapper survey workshops for FY 18 to address the differences in the state surveys, to develop methods to attempt to make the results more comparable, and to integrate the supplemental survey data with the baseline general survey data. The results of this workshop may be helpful in addressing stakeholder communication needs.	None. No revision necessary.
72	The Strategic Plan outlined the importance of transparency regarding the methods used to estimate catch and effort statistics, with the data ultimately being used to inform ocean policy decisions. However, the [Commenter] feels more work must be done in this area, since considerable stakeholder skepticism exists which may be precluding progress. For example, the Council recently convened its Ad Hoc Red Snapper Private Angler Advisory Panel (AP) to discuss management options to increase recreational access to red snapper in federal waters. However, the AP was focused on issues surrounding data collection, estimates of total catch, and biological reference points that reduced progress towards improving management. Though the data generated through MRIP may ultimately inform ocean policy decisions, concerns of stakeholder trust in the data should be of higher concern; if stakeholders do not have confidence in the data used to determine catch levels, then using those data will become exceedingly difficult.	Same response as #61.	None. No revision necessary.

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73	The [Commenter] is also aware of ongoing efforts to calibrate historical and current estimates of catch and effort to ensure that the 'units' of ACLs are compatible with the current survey design. The [Commenter] understands the incremental approach that is being taken; however, the potential for multiple releases of re-estimated historical harvest data over a period of a few years could further exacerbate stakeholder skepticism of these data. The potential for multiple releases also creates additional complexity for stock assessments, as the magnitude and direction of change in recreational catch and effort estimates is difficult to predict and could have a substantial impact on the stock status, ACLs, and/or subsequent sector allocations for species which were apportioned based on catch history. Typically, historical data are treated with much larger coefficients of variance than more recent data; therefore, it may be more beneficial to focus on the accuracy and timeliness of the data produced today, as opposed to the data produced under a different sampling method decades ago.	NOAA Fisheries Policy (Policy Directive 04-114: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/op/pds/documents/04/04-114.pdf) and the needs of fishery stock assessments require that Transition Plans, including recalibration of historic time series of catch data as necessary, be prepared and executed when new survey methods are being introduced. We are attempting to minimize the current ongoing disruption by merging the transitions for the new FES and the APAIS into a single recalibration in 2018. However, further decisions by regional partners to institute changes in survey methods will require new transition plans.	None. No revisions necessary.
74	".... an increased emphasis on communication with and outreach for anglers. Although specific approaches are not identified in the Plan, we expect the regional plans would identify these steps. With respect to communication tools, all forms of media should be explored. In New England, roundtables and workshops with anglers might be a good approach depending on the topic. In addition, the RAP can be a resource for discussing regional initiatives and thinking through ideas on how to improve stakeholder engagement."	We appreciate the suggestions for improving communications in the region. They are consistent with the direction of our Strategic Communications Plan and our interest in working more closely with regional partners in MRIP communications efforts (see Tactic 3.4.1).	None. No revisions necessary.
75	The public needs a clear explanation of how MRIP works including a discussion of the various tradeoffs of the data collection programs within MRIP.	We have heard similar feedback from a number of sources recently, including from the NMFS Northeast Regional Recreational Round Table meetings. We will be working to ensure our communications effort addresses this basic need to improve stakeholder comprehension of the fundamental mechanics of MRIP surveys and the properties and limitations of the survey products.	None. No revisions necessary.
76	Under of the goal of informing key stakeholders, the transition to Fishing Effort Survey from the Coastal Household Telephone Survey is not clearly identified.	This is addressed in Tactic 3.7.2.	None. No revisions necessary.
77	Plan is silent on how the transition to a different data collection program will impact the recreational effort and catch data, stock assessments and ultimately the recreational fishery.	It is not possible to generalize how survey method transition will affect catch statistics, stock assessments, and the fishery. Tactic 2.4.1 calls for maintaining the agency-required Transition Planning and execution process (see http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/op/pds/documents/04/114/04-114-01.pdf) when survey methods are changed in the future.	None. No revisions necessary.
78	Recommend the formation of a regional group of recreational advisors to groundtruth or validate MRIP data estimates.	It is not clear how a stakeholder group would or could "groundtruth or validate" statistical estimates. We agree that improved two-way communication with stakeholders, including continuing communications regarding survey methods and results, is necessary, and is a key component of the Strategic Plan.	None. No revisions necessary.
79	The Plan places as emphasis on for-hire electronic reporting. [The commenter] urge[s] that changes to reporting requirements for the for-hire mode (e.g., electronic rather than paper vessel trip reports) be considered within the Council process	The Strategic Plan indicates that Regional Implementation Teams, each of which includes the Councils, would play the key role in selecting preferred methods for regional data collection. Any decision to proceed with electronic for-hire logbooks will therefore not be a centralized top-down decision.	None. No revisions necessary.
80	The Plan is unclear in explaining if MRIP data can be used for in-season recreational fishery management or if supplemental surveys are necessary for those management purposes.	See response # 60: It is essential that MRIP Regional Implementation Plans fully describe the specifics and basis of regional partners' needs for timeliness of delivery of preliminary catch estimates. Once such needs are fully documented and justified, we will be able to identify potential methods and costs of meeting the needs.	None. No revisions necessary.

No.	Comment	Response	Recommended Action or Revision Made
81	For the Gulf of Maine cod and haddock recreational fishery, a bioeconomic model is used to project future recreational management measures. The model uses available current fishing year (i.e., in- season) MRIP data to project into the next fishing year. [The commenter is] concerned that reliance on incomplete fishing year data may introduce similar uncertainties facing recreational fisheries with in-season management.	The use of incomplete, in-season preliminary catch data in establishing both catch limits and regulatory measures for the following year is an issue for a number of fisheries. The degree to which more timely or complete preliminary estimates are necessary is a consideration to be addressed by the Regional Implementation Teams in cataloging needs and setting priorities in their Regional Implementation Plans.	None. No revisions necessary.
82	[The commenter] suggest[s] that you add a representative from our region (NEFMC or GARFO) to the ESC.	We will take this recommendation under advisement and consider it in the process of re-visiting the MRIP management structure per Tactic 5.1.3.	None. No revisions necessary.
83	Tactics, outcomes, metrics table - "I guess [I would] think about a global edit to this section [so] that when you are already doing something, [it doesn't] sound like you are just starting doing that thing."	A sentence was added that makes it clear that the tactics include items that MRIP is already conducting as well as new actions.	Added a phrase to the introductory text on p. 1 that so indicates.
84	Goal 2_Provide Quality Products: I think these items could be split into the other groups. Some are about meeting customer data needs, some are about ensuring sound science, some are about informing stakeholders.	The Strategic Plan Team recognized that some of the Goals could be combined or partly merged with others. However, the Team concluded that, on balance, the six identified Goals are each important to recognize and to individually attain. The Plan also included important distinctions among the application of Goals/Strategies/Tactics to customers vs. partners vs. stakeholders. These distinctions may not be apparent to reviewers. We will add definitions of these three terms to assist in clarifying the Plan's intent.	Added definitions of customer, stakeholder, and partner, along with baseline scope of MRIP and the Strategic Plan, in text box on pg. 4.
85	Improve hyperlinks to make more direct	Comment acknowledged.	Hyperlinks revised
86	Styles-related edits to text	Comment acknowledged.	Styles revised, as appropriate.
87	The plan aligns with direction that [the commission] is moving on recreational data collection issues, and provides a flexible framework for future collaboration.	We appreciate the comment.	None. No revisions necessary.
88	The Plan uses many terms to identify the entities that MRIP is working with or providing services for (e.g., customer, stakeholder, partner, decision maker). These terms should be defined up front with consideration of when these terms are used to identify internal and external entities, and used appropriately and consistently throughout the Plan.	We agree. See response to #84.	Added definitions of customer, stakeholder, and partner, along with baseline scope of MRIP and the Strategic Plan, in text box on pg. 4.
89	Communication with the public and recreational anglers is a major hurdle for MRIP. More focus and detail is needed for all of the Goals on communicating with the public about how MRIP works and efforts to improve it. This is essential to meeting the MRIP Vision (page 4): "MRIP is the trusted source of U.S. marine recreational catch and effort statistics."	We agree that improving communications is a major challenge. In addition to the Goal 3 Strategies and Tactics in the Strategic Plan, additional detail regarding communication tactics will be provided via the updated MRIP Strategic Communications Plan (see Tactic 3.7.1).	None. No revisions necessary.
90	For-Hire Electronic Reporting (page 6) – Addressing the National Academies recommendation to move to mandatory electronic logbook reporting for all for-hire trips is an unachievable goal, since the MRIP for-hire survey covers both state- and federally-managed for-hire vessels. Given the complexities of fisheries management across the states, it is not realistic to assume that all states will require mandatory electronic reporting for state-permitted captains, or even use the same system as MRIP should they move toward mandatory reporting. Clarification is needed as to whether this goal is only intended for federally-managed for-hire vessels or for the for-hire fleet as a whole. If the goal is for the for-hire fleet as a whole, further detail about the strategy for implementing this at both the state and federal levels is needed move toward mandatory reporting. Clarification is needed as to whether this goal is only intended for federally-managed for-hire vessels or for the for-hire fleet as a whole. If the goal is for the for-hire fleet as a whole, further detail about the strategy for implementing this at both the state and federal levels is needed.	The text on p. 6 refers to a previously completed Road Map for addressing the National Academy of Science's recommendation to develop for-hire electronic logbook programs (http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/New-MRIP/FINAL_Updated_For-Hire_Road_Map-12.6.16.pdf). The Road Map establishes a process and timeline for MRIP to complete and certify one or more for-hire electronic trip reporting designs and to make such MRIP-certified designs available to regional partners for implementation when identified by the partners as preferred methods. The decision whether to implement these designs is deferred to the Regional Implementation Plans per Strategy 5.2 of the MRIP Strategic Plan.	None. No revisions necessary.

No.	Comment	Response	Recommended Action or Revision Made
91	The success of regional implementation plans is dependent on the recognition of the Atlantic Coast as three distinct regions that are in line with federal fishery management council jurisdictions. Councils and the states that fall within each jurisdiction are primary customers of MRIP data, and the regional implementation plans should reflect the diversity of data needs from the North, Mid and South Atlantic Council regions, as well as the data needs that transcend across the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regions. The three distinct Atlantic regions should not be lumped together for regional implementation plans.	MRIP is committed to working with the established Regional data collection partnerships/Fishery Information Networks, in this case ACCSP. ACCSP may choose to adopt individual components or subdivisions of its MRIP Regional Implementation Plan for its sub-regions. However, NMFS/MRIP would defer to ACCSP to make that judgement.	None. No revisions necessary.
Goal 1 - Meet Customer Needs			
93	<i>Tactic: Identify primary customers.</i>		
94	It is concerning that MRIP was not already able to identify primary customers in the development of this strategic plan. This should already be known and identified in the Plan, and the Plan should be framed around meeting the needs for those known customers and how they will be better served.	MRIP is aware of the primary customers for recreational catch and effort data. However, the definition and formal identification of the customers may not be well understood by all MRIP stakeholders. This Tactic will formalize the definition and establish the basis for the focus of the remaining tactics under this Goal.	None. No revisions necessary.
95	<i>Tactic: Assess customer satisfaction at intervals of two to three years.</i>		
96	It is unclear how a Strategy to improve customer satisfaction is going to be accomplished by a Tactic that assesses customer satisfaction. It appears that an additional Tactic for this Strategy is needed to identify methods to improve customer satisfaction after assessing it.	Tactic 1.3.2 is intended to address making improvements that address customer needs. We have modified the Tactic to clarify the intent to act on the results of the assessments.	Revised Tactic 1.3.2 to read: Modify survey designs, and properties and delivery of catch statistics, to improve customer satisfaction in ways that are both feasible and cost-effective.
97	<i>Tactic: Modify survey designs to meet customer needs in ways that are both feasible and cost-effective.</i>		
98	This Tactic could help accomplish the overall Goal of meeting customer needs, but it does not address this specific strategy of working with customers to evaluate feasibility and costs of meeting their various needs.	We agree. We modified the Tactic to add "Working collaboratively with customers, modify..."	Added "Working collaboratively with customers...", to the beginning of Tactic 1.3.1.
Goal 2 - Provide Quality Products			
100	Many of the states and regional interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions are implementing their own recreational data collection systems to supplement or replace MRIP. It is not clear within this Goal how MRIP plans to work or partner with states and interstate Commissions to meet the shared common goal of better data on the recreational fishery (for more informed management).	Regional collaboration is primarily addressed via Goal 5. However, we agree that regional partners need to be involved in effort to improve the quality of our data. Strategy 5.1 is modified to make that involvement clear.	Revised Strategy 2.1 to read: In consultation with partners and expert consultants, develop comprehensive minimum national survey and data requirements and processes for reviewing and certifying survey designs to ensure data comparability, interoperability, and usefulness; provide data that meet regional needs; and periodically review and revise established minimum requirements.
101	This Goal should also recognize that there is a critical need for a common currency for MRIP estimates, and develop Tactics to address this. Currently, the public does not have access to a complete calibrated MRIP time series, and many primary data users are not trained in the methods to properly calibrate MRIP estimates and PSEs for use in stock assessments, management, etc.	The need for developing a "common currency" to appropriately adjust historic time series when new methods are instituted and to compare estimates among overlapping surveys using different methods is addressed by Tactics 2.4.1 and 2.4.2. Once recalibration methods have been developed and cleared for use, we intend to completely recalibrate legacy MRFSS/MRIP estimates for partner and customer use. However, if it becomes necessary, we could consider providing training for partners in how to apply calibration methods to survey estimates as one of the Workshop topics to be developed under Tactic 3.3.3.	Revised Tactic 3.3.3 to read: "Host primary customer workshop to train participants to effectively access, analyze, and/or use data tools, <u>including, for example, custom domain estimation</u> ; assess results and determine benefits of repeating."
	<i>Strategy: Develop comprehensive minimum national survey and data requirements and processes for reviewing and certifying survey designs to ensure data comparability, interoperability, and usefulness; provide data that meet regional needs; and periodically review</i>		
103	It is not clear why there is a need for "minimum national survey and data requirements". If this plan is truly recognizing that there are regional differences in data needs, there would not be any purpose of going through an exercise to develop minimum national requirements. Presumably, regional data needs are finer scale than any national minimum standard. The timeline for this Strategy is very long and if it is not necessary, it should be shifted to the regions.	It is necessary to establish baseline standards for data quality and survey coverage and basic data elements in order to ensure compliance with federal requirements. However, regions should be free to adopt more aggressive minimum standards through the Regional Implementation Planning process. Text is added to p. 7 to clarify this option.	Revised this sentence on p. 8 to read: "Each of these Regional Implementation Teams has begun the work of preparing its own unique implementation strategy, and determining which survey standards/baseline requirements and survey methods best suit its science and management needs."

No.	Comment	Response	Recommended Action or Revision Made
104	Additionally, the Tactics for this Strategy do not address providing “data that meet regional needs”. The [commenter] believes this is a significant issue that merits a separate Strategy and supporting Tactics. An example of a Tactic that would belong in a Strategy for “data that meet regional needs” is to work with customers in each region to develop customized supplemental survey designs when the general MRIP survey is not the best tool to meet a regional data need.	This is a significant issue that is addressed under Goals 1 and 5, by which the Regional Implementation Teams, each of which includes active participation by NMFS at the regional and headquarters level, identifies and prioritizes actions that address regional needs. In particular, Tactics 1.3.1, 1.3.2, and 5.2.1 cover this subject.	None. No revision necessary.
105	<i>Strategy: Establish, maintain, and continuously improve an internal control program to provide quality assurance and quality control for survey data and statistics.</i>		
106	<i>Tactic: Create and support regional bodies to monitor the consistency and quality of the data being generated (as part of regional implementation teams).</i>		
107	Assuming that this Tactic intends for the regional bodies to be used as the internal control program, an additional Tactic is still needed to address the continuous improvement aspect of this control program.	We agree that the concept of continuous improvement is important to the success of this Strategy, and have included the concept in Tactic 2.2.1.	Added "and to assure continuous improvement of data quality" after "generated" in Tactic 2.2.1.
<u>Goal 3 - Inform Our Key Stakeholders</u>			
109	As in Goal 1 with regards to customers, the first step for this Goal needs to be to identify the key stakeholders. Additionally it is also necessary to identify the internal and external decision makers.	We agree. Strategy 3.2.1 addresses this issue.	
110	This Goal should also include a Strategy and Tactics to address outreach to state partners regarding issues such as data review, changes and updates prior to outreach to the public. State partners also have to answer to key stakeholders and as such, states should be coordinated with ahead of outreach to stakeholders so they may be better prepared. There are many examples where state partners are learning about potentially controversial changes and updates at the same time they are being released to the public (e.g., when MRFSS estimates were re-calculated using new MRIP estimation methods, states were not given a chance to review updated landings and understand differences between new and old estimates before the release of new estimates to the public). In the past, states were involved in the final review of MRIP estimates before they were made public and understand what factors may be driving those fluctuations. States are no longer provided preliminary estimates for review, and must learn about unusual increases/decreases/overages in landings at the same time estimates are released to the public.	Historically, states have not been provided with a review opportunity for preliminary estimates prior to their posting to the public website. State reviews of the preliminary estimates have been provided for via Wave meetings and other mechanisms. If states are given an opportunity to review estimates before they are posted, the duration of the pre-publicatons review period (now ~ 45 days) may be lengthened. Also, broader dissemination of the pre-publication estimates may result in inappropriate public distribution. Nonetheless, the question merits exploration if the state partners have a key interest. This issue does not rise to the level of a Strategic Plan Strategy or Tactic, but will be explored separately with the States and the FINs.	None. No revision necessary.
111	<i>Strategy: Increase key stakeholder, partner, and customer comprehension of the characteristics and requirements for surveys and the properties and limitations of catch and effort statistics.</i>		
112	<i>Tactic: Develop targeted outreach materials and tactics to inform stakeholders on the importance of various survey components and limitations.</i>		
113	The targeted stakeholder outreach materials also need to address how data is collected, and educate stakeholders on the utility, merit, cost and benefits, etc. of a survey versus a census of fishing activity.	Communicaton needs and products of this nature are expected to be identified in communicaton needs assessments per Tactic 3.1.1.	None. No revision necessary.
<u>Goal 4 - Ensure Sound Science</u>			
115	<i>Strategy: Maintain best practices and best available survey and estimation methods developed for program use.</i>		
	<i>Tactic: Seek independent reviews of current and proposed survey designs, estimation methods, and data collection technologies that are on the MRIP Certification Track.</i>		
117	It is noted in the comments section for this Tactic in Appendix C that this is the only tactic that relates to certification. There are several survey designs in the Gulf of Mexico that have completed the review process or their review is already underway. None of the methods that have completed the review have been certified yet. It seems certification should be the end goal. What is the tactic for facilitating certification once the review process has been completed? Once a new survey is certified, what is the process for facilitating implementation?	Certification process requirements and procedures will be addressed in the documentation process under Tactic 2.3.1. Once new survey designs are certified, the Regional Implementation process is the key vehicle for facilitating implementation.	None. No revision necessary.
<u>Goal 5 - Operate Collaboratively</u>			
	<i>Strategy: Maintain a team-oriented program management structure that includes partners and key stakeholders in deliberations on program design, management, and implementation.</i>		

No.	Comment	Response	Recommended Action or Revision Made
120	All of the Tactics for this Strategy are reviews and assessments, but do not directly address how the reviews and assessments will actually maintain a team-oriented management structure.	We agree. The Final Strategic Plan adds Tactic 5.1.6 to address this.	Added a new Tactic 5.1.6 to read: Revise program management and team structure periodically to assure full partner engagement, based on results of Strategy 5.1 reviews and provisions of Regional Implementation Plans.
	<i>Strategy: Assess feasibility and costs/benefits of expanding regional implementation of data collection and data management: field work by states and off-site telephone/mail/internet survey work, survey management, frame maintenance, estimation, and QA/QC done</i>		
	<i>Tactic: Evaluate and, as appropriate, support and enable delegating responsibility of survey operations to regions, based on (yet to be established) standards to maintain data consistency and comparability.</i>		
123	This Tactic identifies delegating responsibility of survey operations, but does not address how survey costs would be handled. This Tactic should address expected financial responsibilities associated with the delegation of survey operation responsibilities.	Tactic 5.3.2 is intended to address this subject.	None. No revision necessary.
	<i>Outcome: State and regional partners are fully engaged in the program and are willing to undertake data collection and estimation tasks, and to invest partner resources.</i>		
	<i>Metric: Number of states, FINs actively engaged in survey operations.</i>		
126	It is concerning that this outcome seems to indicate that the states will be expected to pick up more and more of the costs of implementing MRIP. The outcome should be that MRIP, state, and regional partners are fully engaged collaboratively to undertake data collection and estimation tasks, and to invest partner resources. The metric should be the number of states, FINs that are actively engaged with MRIP in survey operations.	We agree - "with MRIP" has been added to the second outcome for this Goal.	Added:"with MRIP" after "engaged" in the second key outcome and metric for Goal 5.
127	MRIP is a crucial component of sustainably managing our nation's fishery resources. In recent years, NOAA Fisheries has made substantial progress in improving the design and process of MRIP, and we are encouraged that this strategic plan represents a continuation of that effort and an important step towards making the iterative process of MRIP improvement more accessible and transparent to stakeholders. We appreciate the opportunity to review and provide comment to this plan. Recommendations:		
128	o Develop a dedicated education and training program for stakeholders and partners.	Rather than create an entirely new program, MRIP prefers to work with the established MREP program. This is addressed in Tactic 3.4.2.	None. No revision necessary.
129	o Prioritize the creation of minimum marine recreational fishery survey requirements and release them ahead of the proposed schedule.	While we agree that adopting baseline requirements is a priority, the schedule for completing this task can not be advanced significantly without sacrificing its quality and other essential program tasks.	None. No revision necessary.
130	o Continue documenting MRIP progress through external review, such as regular assessments by the National Academy of Sciences.	Tactic 2.1.4 provides for periodic independent reviews of MRIP. In addition, periodic regional reviews are covered by Tactic 4.3.2.	None. No revision necessary.
131	o Implement the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences to increase and expand use of electronic technologies for fishery reporting and monitoring.	This recommendation is addressed by Tactics 4.1.2 and 4.1.4.	None. No revision necessary.
132	[The commenter] is pleased with the efforts MRIP has made to address the recommendations given by the National Research Council's 2006 Review of Recreational Fishery Survey Methods... We note the vast improvements to reduce, if not eliminate, bias in the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey and catch estimation processes....These improvements were recently highlighted in the 2016 reassessment of the program by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). That report highlighted the substantial improvements made in MRIP that have led to better and more precise data for stock assessments and fishery management decisions. Despite these improvements, MRIP continues to be plagued by poor angler support, particularly in the Gulf of Mexico. While MRIP's statistical processes are among the best in the world, many of the improvements made have been invisible or inaccessible to stakeholders. We strongly support efforts to address this issue, and note that the Plan does seek to address and course correct this issue via education, outreach and increased data transparency.	We acknowledge and appreciate the comment. The Strategic Plan devotes considerable attention to communications in order to address the subject of this comment.	None. No revision necessary.

No.	Comment	Response	Recommended Action or Revision Made
133	The key theme noted in both Goals 1 & 3 is to identify and understand the needs of MRIP's primary customers (state partners and anglers) and develop tailored outreach and communication materials to address those needs. [The commenter] believes these goals to be key facets for the long-term efficacy of MRIP. Confidence in MRIP data is low in many regions. For example, in the Gulf of Mexico, a large contingent of private recreational anglers is skeptical of MRIP catch estimates for red snapper. The distrust of MRIP data is powering a backlash against the program and the negative perception of MRIP estimates is increasingly hampering the ability of managers to make sound decisions.	We acknowledge and appreciate the comment. The Strategic Plan devotes considerable attention to communications in order to address the subject of this comment.	None. No revision necessary.
134	While the tactics identified under Goals 1 & 3 are important, we strongly encourage MRIP to develop a more rigorous outreach and education program to recreational anglers. The Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) is a positive model to emulate. This program provides stakeholders with education on fishery science and management issues, enabling them to better understand processes and engage more effectively to represent their interests. While we acknowledge that some of the MREP curriculum touches on MRIP issues, we strongly feel that additional educational workshops and trainings for anglers on the MRIP process are appropriate and necessary. These could be half-day events that better explain the process, progress, and challenges of MRIP, and could dispel misunderstandings and build greater support. An improved understanding of MRIP would benefit stakeholders and council members, allowing them to create better management solutions and produce better conservation outcomes.	Same comment and response as #128.	None. No revision necessary.
135	Goal 2, to provide quality products, is a critical part of MRIP's mission. We strongly support this goal, and wish to highlight two tactics within the Plan. First, the Plan says MRIP will develop "a clear and concise set of minimum requirements for data collection, statistical estimation, access, and information management." The timeline for this process goes until 2022. [The commenter] strongly recommends MRIP to move quickly on this process and set minimum standards ahead of the intended timeline.	Same comment and response as #129.	None. No revision necessary.
136	MRIP should strive to produce a set of national standards for survey and data collection methods as soon as possible. While some of the marine fishery commissions have data standards in place, these guidelines are not universal and this can create inequities in when, what, and how data is made available.	Same comment and response as #129.	None. No revision necessary.
137	We also strongly support the tactic to "assess need for development and use of tools that convert statistics produced by surveys into common currency across all surveys and develop as necessary." However, the need for these tools is already apparent. Some states in the MRIP system are moving toward their own marine recreational fishery survey design systems. As state partners break away from MRIP and institute their own survey system it is imperative that those programs provide comparative and consistent data of similar accuracy and precision to MRIP. Catch and effort estimate data have direct and immediate ramifications on fishery management and fishery science processes. To maintain confidence in data, standards must be in place. Many fisheries, like red snapper or summer flounder, cannot afford to have multiple survey systems that are not calibrated or of similar statistical power to MRIP. Thus, we recommend that these two tactics should receive increased priority and be executed in a shorter time horizon than is suggested by the Plan.	This subject is addressed by Tactics 2.4.1 and 2.4.2. Both of these Tactics are scheduled for continuous action over the Strategic Plan time horizon. They are presently receiving, and will continue to receive, significant attention on an ongoing basis.	None. No revision necessary.

No.	Comment	Response	Recommended Action or Revision Made
138	We encourage MRIP to continue to seek external validation of its methods and products. The recent review by the NAS clearly demonstrated the progress made by the program. MRIP's voluntary request for this review is to be commended, as not many programs would seek this extensive investigation of their processes. Regular review by the NAS (for example, every 5 years) will document the steady improvements being made to MRIP and provide expert feedback to guide continued strategic developments. Thus, we support the tactic in Goal 4 to seek independent reviews, and suggest that regular MRIP reviews be considered under that tactic.	Same comment and response as #130.	None. No revision necessary.
139	We were encouraged by the statements made in the NAS 2017 review on the use of electronic technologies[1] and MRIP's new policy on electronic reporting technologies.[2] Electronic reporting in the for-hire fishery is moving forward, both in the South Atlantic and Gulf. MRIP must ensure technological-based methods can support the robust data needs of fishery management and science. Ocean Conservancy strongly recommends MRIP address the recommendations made in the NAS 2017 review and that it works swiftly to implement and capitalize on the national momentum for electronic monitoring and reporting methods. We point to the need to find a suitable survey design to capture angler effort from web-based methods. While it is clear the new fishery effort survey (FES) is a marked improvement on the telephone-based survey, it is apparent that the FES could eventually suffer from the same degradation of response rates as the nation moves further toward electronic means of communication. We support the tactics outlined in Goal 4, however we urge MRIP to create a more detailed timeline on electronic technology evaluation. We propose that MRIP creates a specific panel that looks only at emerging technologies.	We previously responded to the recommendation to address the NAS 2017 electronic technologies recommendation (#131). We will take the recommendations to establish an ET panel and to create a more detailed timeline under advisement as we address Tactic 4.1.2.	None. No revision necessary.
140	We applaud NOAA's efforts to improve data collection and increase stakeholder collaboration, especially within the recreational sector. We reach out primarily to extend our willingness to help with stakeholder collaboration, data gathering, and offer our assistance to MRIP's efforts. We also have a few substantive comments and reflections from our involvement with MRIP and fisheries management issues.	We very much appreciate the offer of assistance in our outreach and two-way communication efforts.	None. No revision necessary.
141	Transparency and accountability: We recommend one page summaries of the raw data to be published by MRIP a few weeks prior to the total catch numbers being used by regulators to determine seasons and bag limits. We also support educational campaigns on how the catch data is gathered and computed into annual catch numbers. Displaying transparency and accountability by MRIP between the survey data and final catch numbers that regulators rely on would greatly improve angler trust. We are willing to assist these educational campaigns or distribute educational materials.	We appreciate the offer of support for assistance in our education efforts, and agree regarding improving dissemination of information about how catch is determined. Regarding release of preliminary catch estimates: We distribute preliminary estimates broadly about 45 days following the end of a two-month sample period (or "Wave"). Many of our partners need access to those numbers as soon as possible, so we can't further delay their release. However, any interested person can subscribe to the MRIP e-mail notification to receive information about accessing the preliminary estimates as soon as they are posted:(https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/SASStoredProcess/do?_program=//Foundation/STP/mrip_qry_index&_username=webanon@saspw&_password={sas002}91C35E0700DD018D58BD20253AA2968D108D9E775907AA76098D6B8B23619041&mripemail=Subscribe).	None. No revision necessary.
142	We are concerned with the known shortfalls of the APAIS & phone survey methodology. We support modernizing these data gathering methods to include electronic reporting, both in the for hire sector and by incorporating mobile apps for recreational anglers to use. We support the development and piloting of these applications and can help with stakeholder collaboration in the Chesapeake Bay region.	We acknowledge the comments and note that the Strategic Plan addresses these subjects in Tactics 4.1.2 and 4.1.4. Additional information is available in the MRIP Fact Sheet at: http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/New-MRIP/newscasts/2016-12-14%20Newscast_Electronic-Reporting.pdf	None. No revision necessary.

No.	Comment	Response	Recommended Action or Revision Made
143	Recent Cobia management decisions have motivated and educated recreational anglers in Virginia on MRIP's role and also led our state to require mandatory reporting. We believe MRIP could use the data from these educated and motivated stakeholders to begin determining how these "alternative data sources" could be incorporated into the MRIP models.	The Strategic Plan includes Strategies and Tactics that enable development, testing and certification of alternate and supplemental survey designs that address specific data collection needs that may not be addressed sufficiently by the general MRIP surveys. The overall strategy provides for identifying these kinds of issues and needs through the Regional Implementation Planning process.	None. No revision necessary.
144	We are committed to working with MRIP in any way possible to improve data collection and monitoring of this fishery component. We support the Vision, Mission, and values as expressed in the Strategic Plan. We also appreciate MRIP's efforts since 2006, as documented in the milestones, to evaluate and improve the program through open and collaborative processes. While ensuring confidence and credibility is an ongoing challenge, the recent use of workgroups, regional teams, and workshops to address program improvements has greatly improved communication and transparency with stakeholders, including the Council. In the future, we hope that through this strategic plan, the challenges facing recreational fisheries data in the South Atlantic will move beyond the discussion and idea presentation phase and become specific actions that will improve data collection and therefore management.	We acknowledge and very much appreciate the comment.	None. No revision necessary.
145	Goal 1 – understanding the customers: Five years is a long interval between updating customer needs. Much can change in that time. We support the proposed timely identification of needs and recommend an update by 2021, in time to be included in the next Strategic Plan.	We agree. The timeline for completing a second customer needs assessment has been moved up to 2021, to support the next Strategic Plan update.	The following changes are made to the Goal 1 implementation schedule/timeline: for Tactic 1.1.2, added a Timeline bullet in 2021, to assess customer satisfaction following the customer satisfaction assessment in 2021; moved second bullet in Tactic 1.2.1 from 2021 to 2020.
146	Goal 1 – improving satisfaction: Customer satisfaction should be evaluated more frequently. Online survey methods could be developed to gauge satisfaction on an annual basis from at least key customers and data users such as Councils, States, and Commissions. Such groups often have a good sense of trends in general public satisfaction as well.	Tactic 1.2.1 calls for assessing customer satisfaction at a two-to-three year interval. We believe that frequency is sufficient, but would be open to re-assessing after we gain experience with the process and results.	None. No revision necessary.
147	In some instances, the markers for events do not align with the stated frequency of the activity, both here in Goal 1 and for many of the other entries.	We appreciate the comment. The timelines have been edited to ensure they are correct.	None. No revision necessary.
148	Goal 2 – minimum standards: This is critically needed, and we suggest this be prioritized for completion in 2018 for implementation in 2019.	While we agree that adopting baseline requirements is a priority, the schedule for completing this task can not be advanced significantly without sacrificing its quality and other essential program tasks.	None. No revision necessary.
149	Goal 3 – communication with key stakeholders: Recommend efforts to identify and maintain contact with key stakeholders should be ongoing and continuous. The same applies to evaluating stakeholder understanding and updating communication strategies.	Contact and two-way communications with stakeholders will be continuous, addressing the provisions of the Strategic Communication Plan adopted per Tactic 3.7.1. Certain more formal key stakeholder identification exercises, such as Social Network Analyses, will be conducted periodically.	Edited timeline to be continuous.
150	Goal 3 – formal external assessment: Support conducting a needs assessment now as indicated, and recommend an update in 2021 to help inform the next Strategic Plan.	The Plan's Timeline calls for an updated Communications Needs Assessment in 2020.	None. No revision necessary.
151	Goal 5 – maintaining a team-oriented program: Recommend annual reviews and evaluation of ownership to ensure partners are represented and active on teams. This could be combined with the annual customer satisfaction evaluation suggested above.	As with Tactic 1.2.1, Tactics 5.1.1 and 5.2.2 call for assessing customer satisfaction at a two-to-three year interval. We believe that frequency is sufficient, but would be open to re-assessing after we gain experience with the process and results. We agree that these three assessments can be combined or at least coordinated.	None. No revision necessary.
152	Goal 6 – inventory of program needs: Recommend updating the national inventory of partner needs in 2021 and evaluating progress addressing those needs to inform the next Strategic Plan.	The full evaluation of partner needs is based on the Regional Implementation Plans. Since those are scheduled to be updated by 2022 (Tactic 5.2.1), it will be premature to comprehensively reassess needs before then. We also believe it is unrealistic to call on the Regional Implementation Teams to do comprehensive updates to the regional plans more frequently than at 5-year intervals.	None. No revision necessary.

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153	Regional implementation plans are cited in several places as a means of ensuring collaboration and identifying and addressing program needs. Given the importance and diversity of recreational fishing in the South Atlantic, we request development of a South Atlantic Regional Implementation Team. The characteristics of recreational fisheries in the South Atlantic differ greatly from those along the rest of the Atlantic seaboard; neither the Southeast nor the Atlantic coast are “regions” in the sense of having a single set of challenges or priorities. Creation of a South Atlantic Regional Implementation Team will ensure that the unique needs of the recreational fisheries in our area are highlighted and addressed.	MRIP is committed to working with the established Regional data collection partnerships/Fishery Information Networks; in this case, ACCSP. ACCSP may choose to adopt individual components or subdivisions of its MRIP Regional Implementation Plan for its sub-regions. However, NOAA Fisheries/MRIP would defer to ACCSP to make that judgement.	None. No revision necessary.
154	The section of the plan which addresses program resources and funding needs does not fully encompass the entire scope of the nationwide recreational program. More emphasis needs to be placed on the role of the state partners who make up the regional Fisheries Information Networks (FINs).	Goal 6 is intended to include assessment of needs and exploration of funding at both state and federal levels. Tactics 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.2, 6.2.3, and 6.2.4 all include assessments and actions involving both state and federal funding needs and strategies.	None. No revision necessary.
155	The plan should have a better description of the roles of the regional FINs and the resources they provide to MRIP.	The FINs serve as MRIP Regional Implementation Teams. The role of the Regional Implementation Teams is well developed in the Strategic Plan text (pp. 7 and 20-21), and in the Strategies and Tactics, including Tactics 5.2.1, 5.3.1. The FIN (and other partner) resources provided to MRIP are to be catalogued per Tactic 6.2.4.	None. No revision necessary.
156	The funding stream to the regional FINs is not described and should be laid out very clearly. MRIP would be wise to fund the FINs at an increased level and invest more in the services and projects that come out of the FINs. These programs are the mechanism for the state partners to provide data into the program.	The MRIP Strategic Plan does not address historic distribution of funding. Rather, it addresses developing a comprehensive assessment of partner needs and priorities through Regional Implementation Plans (Tactic 6.2.2) and setting national criteria for addressing needs and distributing funds (Tactic 6.1.1).	None. No revision necessary.
157	Additionally many innovative projects, particularly in the realm of computer hardware and software have been generated from grants to the FINs.	We acknowledge the comment and the significant contributions the FINs have made to MRIP.	None. No revision necessary.
158	The MRIP plan should reflect a commitment to maintain a prioritized inventory of essential program needs, from both the federal and state partner perspective and continue to establish consistent, equitable, and cost-effective priorities which apply to all MRIP partners. A comprehensive list of funding resources.....beyond WSFR..... Identifying these funding sources and the proper application of the funds will allow partners to better allocate resources efficiently and ultimately standardize their approach to improve data quality.	This recommendation is addressed by Strategy 6.1.	None. No revision necessary.
159	Cooperative and standardized methodology is essential to implement the 6 goals listed in the Strategic Plan.	We agree. Strategy 2.1 addresses this subject.	None. No revision necessary.
160	NOAA Fisheries has recommended that the MRIP program consider conducting targeted annual non-response studies as a standard component of the Fishing Effort Survey (FES), and [commenter] supports this.	That recommendaton was made to NOAA Fisheries by the National Academies of Science (NAS) in its 2017 review of MRIP. We acknowledge the comment's support for the NAS recommendation. Tactic 4.1.4 addresses how NOAA Fisheries will respond to the NAS technical recommendations.	None. No revision necessary.
161	There is a need for these studies to monitor and identify how the change in approach from the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) affects the number of non-responses and whether bias results from the new non-responses in the new sampling framework. Additionally, the change in effort estimates when transitioning from the CHTS to the FES protocol must be strictly monitored and accounted for when the change from CHTS to FES occurs in 2018. The current project to run both sampling methodologies concurrently should be extended beyond the existing 3 years, or additional side by side comparisons should take place in the future to spot check how the differences in information from the two survey types changes through time.	This comment also appears to be consistent with NAS 2017 recommendations, and cites specific technical questions that are at a level not typically addressed in a Strategic Plan.	None. No revision necessary.

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162	[The commenter] is in agreement with National Academy of Sciences recommendation that the data collection relative to the For Hire sector should be changed to an electronic census style reporting system. [The commenter] is pleased that the MRIP plan identifies this as a milestone however the plan is too vague in its implementation.	On p. 6, the Strategic Plan refers to a previously completed Road Map for addressing the National Academy of Science's recommendation to develop for-hire electronic logbook programs (http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/New-MRIP/FINAL_Updated_For-Hire_Road_Map-12.6.16.pdf). The Road Map establishes a process and timeline for MRIP to complete and certify one or more for-hire electronic trip reporting designs and to make such MRIP-certified designs available to regional partners for implementation when identified by the partners as preferred methods. The decision whether to implement these designs is deferred to the Regional Implementation Plans per Strategy 5.2 of the MRIP Strategic Plan.	None. No revision necessary.
163	The MRIP strategic plan should outline a more comprehensive plan of how NOAA Fisheries will work with the FINs, Fishery Management Councils, and state partners to achieve this goal. Specific detail should be given to the most challenging aspect of this new approach, which is the validation of the data.	Strategy for addressing ER FH logbook is in policy directive. Group developed in SE to examine implementation. Through that ACCSP involvement on FH team.	None. No revision necessary.
164	A study should be established to identify what modifications would be needed to validate For Hire sector data from interviews of a sub set of the trips made. Furthermore it should be explored which data source is better for validation purposes, the anglers who were on the trip or the captain of the vessel.	Ongoing MRIP projects are addressing this question.	None. No revision necessary.
165	[The commenter] suggests that implementation of a census For Hire survey starts at the regional level of the fishery management councils and then continue to work with the state partners to achieve this goal. The reasoning is that the For Hire fleet is a varied population of large and small participants. The vessels in the fleet that operate across federal and state jurisdictions will require a standardized approach to validation. Once this methodology is established, the state partners can implement it locally in a manner that best suits their needs.	MRIP is currently prioritizing the completion of certification of design(s) for for-hire electronic logbook programs. Once certified programs are in place, we will work with our Regional Implementation Team partners to decide on whether and how to best to implement them.	None. No revision necessary.
166	one of the MRIP values is transparency, and the desire for transparency is noted across multiple goals. [The commenter] would like to see transparency reflected in MRIP final products through the accessibility of data for various user levels and inclusion of desirable data. For example, there are beginner to expert anglers and little to high levels of scientific or economic understanding. Additionally, in Alaska, there has been only a fraction of relevant socio-economic information collected over the many years of voracious recreational fishing in the State. The broader the levels of information available, the more likely it will be accessed and used.	Up until the present, MRIP has not established a Regional Implementation Team for Alaska, and has not funded the surveys carried out by the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game. We are currently engaged in discussions with regional partners about establishing a Regional Implementation Team for the North Pacific Region. Once a decision is made to convene a regional team and to develop a Regional Implementation Plan for the region, it will be possible to address regional stakeholder information needs through the regional implementation plan. However, we would note that, at present, the MRIP-related surveys nationally focus on catch and effort, and not on socio-economic, data. Other surveys conducted by NMFS and partners address social and economic data.	None. No revision necessary.
167	Secondly, [the commenter] would like to see a decrease in non-sampling errors by tying an electronic logbook-like system to anglers' fishing and drivers' license numbers. Currently, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game is implementing its electronic logbook system for saltwater charter captains to record clients' catch by species, location, and size. The system is easy to use and does not require online access to use on the water. No comparable data collection system is even available for unguided anglers to track their catch in real time, despite larger unguided allocations in some fisheries. For the purposes of data collection and management, this would reduce recall error, nonresponse error, and coverage error, and reduce opportunities to circumvent regulations, e.g., buying multiple 3-day licenses to circumvent annual limits.	MRIP has provided funds to develop and test electronic reporting programs for for-hire fisheries, including Alaska's. MRIP has also funded studies of angler reporting applications. Continued development of electronic technologies is supported by Tactic 4.1.2. More information about MRIP's priorities for electronic reporting is available at: http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/New-MRIP/newscasts/2016-12-14%20Newscast_Electronic-Reporting.pdf	None. No revision necessary.

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168	Regarding Goal 1, Meet Customer Needs, [the commenter] notes that 2017 is the only time during which MRIP will identify primary customers. [The commenter] posits that this tactic should be revisited at the same time as “customer needs” is revisited. Data customers will vary based on the data available and whether it meets their needs, and innovations in data collection and presentation down the line may well open a new area of primary customers. These potential new customers should be considered ‘primary’ when reevaluating customer needs. [The commenter] also hopes that MRIP will use diverse methods of identifying its primary data customers to create these new opportunities.	We do not anticipate significant changes in key customers, but agree that, if a Regional Implementation Plan is developed for the North Pacific Region, we would need to add to our customer inventory at that time.	None. No revision necessary.
169	Regarding Goal 3, Informing Our Key Stakeholders, one of the strategies is to “focus communication and education efforts on key stakeholders most likely to pass information on to others....” SEAGO agrees that it is vital to identify and maintain contact with these key stakeholders to disburse, or even collect, information. SEAGO further suggests that the MRIP Strategic Plan should consider the benefits of fashioning key stakeholders or community liaisons in a similar manner as online social influencers.	We very much appreciate this suggestion, and will consider it as a means of working with identified key influencers going forward.	None. No revision necessary.